Lecture: Healthy Marriages

Test Section 3
‘How To Be A Good Wife’
The following is excerpted from a 1950’s high school economics textbook:

– Have dinner ready. Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal on time. This is a way of letting him know that you have been thinking of him and are concerned about his meals. Most men are hungry when they come home and the prospect of a good meal is part of the warm welcome needed.
– Prepare yourself. Take fifteen minutes to rest so that you will be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your makeup, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh looking. He has just been with a lot of work-weary people. Be a little gay and a little more interesting. His boring day may need a lift.

– Clear away the clutter. Make one last trip through the main part of your house just before your husband arrives, gathering up school books, toys, paper, etc. Then run a dust cloth over the tables. Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order, and it will give you a lift too.
– Prepare the children. Take a few minutes to wash the children's hands and faces (if they are small), comb their hair, and if necessary change their clothes. They are little treasures and he would like to see them playing the part.

– Minimize all noises. At the time of his arrival, eliminate all noise of the washer, dryer, dishwasher or vacuum. Try to encourage the children to be quiet. Be happy to see him. Greet him with a warm smile and be glad to see him.
– Some don'ts. Don't greet him with problems or complaints. Don't complain if he is late for dinner. Count this as minor compared to what he might have gone through that day. Make him comfortable. Have him lean back in a comfortable chair or suggest that he lie down in the bedroom. Have a cool or warm drink ready for him. Arrange his pillow and offer to take off his shoes. Speak in a low, soft, soothing and pleasant voice. Allow him to relax and unwind.
Listen to him. You may have a dozen things to tell him, but the moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first.

Make the evening his. Never complain if he does not take you out to dinner or to other pleasant entertainment. Instead try to understand his world of strain and pressure. He needs to unwind and relax.

The goal. Try to make your home a place of peace and order where your husband can relax his body and spirit.
The Modern Woman’s Reply

• A woman accompanied her husband to the doctor's office. After his checkup, the doctor called the wife into his office alone.

• He said, "Your husband is suffering from a very severe disease, combined with horrible stress. If you don't do the following, your husband will surely die: Each morning fix him a healthy breakfast. Be pleasant and make sure he is in a good mood.

• For lunch make him a nutritious meal. For dinner prepare an especially nice meal for him.
Don't burden him with chores, as he probably had a hard day. Don't discuss your problems with him; it will only make his stress worse and, most importantly, satisfy his every whim.

If you can do this for the next ten months to a year, I think your husband will regain his health completely."

On the way home, the husband asked his wife, "What did the doctor say?"
Modern Woman’s Reply (cont.)
Time Honored Tradition: MARRIAGE!

- Social Institution & a Private Relationship
- Social “expectations” related to marriage
  1. Permanence
  2. Sexual Exclusivity
How Marriage Lasts

*Big Things vs. Small Things*
Formula for a Successful Marriage

• Formula for a Successful Marriage
  – Both individuals are independent and mature
  • _______- best predictor of successful marriage

• Both individuals love not only each other but also themselves
  – Secure
  – Self-confident

Weinstein, Powers, & Laverghetta, 2010
Formula for a Successful Marriage

• Both individuals enjoy being alone as well as together
  – Time apart helps the heart grow fonder
  – Too much time together creates a failure to appreciate

• Both partners express themselves assertively
  – People that are non-assertive often express themselves in a passive approach
  – The more clearly that someone can express themselves, the more likely the chance for partner compliance

(Kamp, Dush, & Taylor, 2012)
Formula for a Successful Marriage

• Both individuals are friends as well as lovers
  – Law of enlightened self-interest (social exchange theory)
  – Non-oppressive caring
What keeps a marriage going?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Husband</th>
<th>Wife</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My spouse is my best friend</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like my spouse as a person</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage is a long-term commitment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage is sacred</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We agree on aims and goals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My spouse has grown more interesting</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want the relationship to succeed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An endearing marriage is important to social stability</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We laugh together</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am proud of my spouse’s achievements</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We agree on a philosophy of life</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We agree on our sex life</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We agree on how and how often to show affection</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Characteristics of Successful Marriages

1. Responsibility
2. Adaptability, flexibility, tolerance
3. Unselfishness
4. Communication
5. Empathy & sensitivity
6. Admiration, respect
7. Affection
8. Companionship
9. Ability to deal with crises, stress
10. Spirituality values
3 Types of Stable Relationships (Gottman)

- _______________
- _______________
- _______________

(Driver, Tabares, Shapiro, Nahm & Gottman, 2003)
• You get _______ with one another from time to time but don’t let ___ feelings overtake the relationship. Your spouse is your ‘best friend’ and warmth and sharing are emphasized.

• Suggestions:
  ◦ Pick your battles carefully
  ◦ Acknowledge your spouse’s viewpoint before expressing your own
  ◦ Moderate your emotions
  ◦ Trust your partner
  ◦ Enhance romance
• Strong __________attachment.
• Intense ________are juggled adeptly.
• Risk of __________________remain unbridled.
• Suggestions:
  • Don’t tell your partner ________________
    ________________
  • Offer ______and _________appreciation
• Express ________ in your spouse
• Choose to be ________, regardless of your spouse’s actions
• Be _____ and ________
• __________
• Be careful about teasing
• Relationship is built ______________ foundation that allows couple to _________ periodic turbulence.
• Tendency to ________ negative emotions too much and not get ______________ ____________
• Suggestions:
  – Get in touch with your ________
  – Reaffirm your ______________ about your relationship
  – Learn to level with your spouse when necessary
  – Create ‘suggestion boxes’
  – Turn to others for support
Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse
Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

1. __________
2. __________
3. ___________
4. __________

(Gottman et al., 1998)
Gottman’s General Suggestions for Improving Your Relationship

• Calm down
  – Rewrite your inner script

• Listen & speak non-defensively
  – Editing (not reciprocate negative)

• When possible, approach issues with minimal anger and with warning
  – Especially true when approaching husbands
Gottman’s General Suggestions for Improving Your Relationship (cont)

• Validate your partner
  – Verbally and nonverbally

• Listen to what he or she has to say & be open to change
  – Especially husbands

• Accept successful repair attempts

• Overlearning
The Magic Marital Interaction Ratio

• Satisfied couples: _____________________

• Dissatisfied couples: __________________

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